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2/13/78

AS 008

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

(XGDS-2)

TO : AMB, DCM, POL3, POL/R, USIS,  
ARA/ECA (BUMPUS), HA (BOVIS) (Cruz)

DATE: February 13, 1978

FROM : POL: WHHallman

SUBJECT: DISAPPEARANCES AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

Mr. and Mrs. Jose Westerkamp came to the Embassy during the afternoon of February 9 to pass on some disturbing news concerning disappearances in La Plata.

According to the Westerkamps three young men disappeared shortly after midnight on February 3 within minutes of having been released from La Plata prison.

Gonzalo Carranza was apparently released first--at about 10 minutes past midnight. He had been held in "UNIDAD 9 - PABELLON 2" charged under PEN with a specific crime, and was believed to have been released in accordance with a judge's decision following a legal process.

Carranza's mother told Mr. and Mrs. Westerkamp that her son's release had been confirmed to her by prison authorities when she attempted to visit her son at prison during the following weekend. She confirmed this in a telephone call to Blanca Vollenweider here at the Embassy. Her son never arrived home. Mrs. Carranza said that she had been told by a priest (She did not give his name.) that Gonzalo had been taken by members of the Army two or three blocks from the prison's entrance, within minutes of his middle-of-the-night exit.

Mrs. Carranza was also told by the priest that a young man named Guillermo Segalli and another whose last name was Dominguez had been released within an hour of Gonzalo, and that both had disappeared under similar circumstances. Segalli's mother also called the Embassy to confirm this.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S20000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

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Segalli's departure was apparently expected--his name had appeared on the PEN release list. He had been held under PEN for 17 months but never charged. The priest who spoke with Mrs. Carranza did not know the first name of Dominguez, nor the circumstances of his detention.

Families of persons in prison at La Plata are anguished at this news. The Westerkamps, who have a son in jail there, hope now that his name will not appear on a PEN list since they believe he could be actually safer remaining in prison. (Comment: Minister of Interior Harguindeguy recently told an American judge that he had told Mrs. Alfredo Bravo "your husband is actually safer in La Plata in prison--there are people who would otherwise do him in."). The Westerkamps reported that it is commonly believed that prison authorities had to be in league with the Army abductors; they would never otherwise have arranged prisoner releases to take place at that hour of the night.

#### PERMANENT ASSEMBLY

Dr. Westerkamp said that he has resigned from his position of leadership in the Permanent Assembly because he fears that Communists or people with Communist associations are taking charge of the Assembly's activity. He did not elaborate, but did say that he is the only person who has resigned. He said that members of this "communist" group had all along opposed contacts between the Assembly and American Embassy. He said that when the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo originally came to the Assembly asking that space within its headquarters be given them for organizing their activities it was the same leftist group that had voted against this and thereby, according to Westerkamp, "pushed the mothers into the arms of the Liga--a Communist-oriented organization." Mrs. Westerkamp at this point said she was acquainted with several of the mothers and believed it unlikely that many of them had a Communist orientation.

#### BIOGRAPHIC NOTE

Westerkamp mentioned again that he has been dismissed from his position as Professor of Physics at the Buenos Aires University, he believes because of his association with the Permanent Assembly. He said that it came as a surprise when his name did not appear among those of other professors rehired for the academic year beginning March 1978. Only a few weeks before Westerkamp has been commended by his department head and been guest of honor at a luncheon given by his colleagues. His dismissal, Westerkamp believes, must have been the decision of the University Rector.

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## PRESS REPORT

After this memorandum was put in final form the story of the Carranza abduction, and the abductions of several others, was published in the Buenos Aires Herald. It explains further the nature of the charges against and the release of Carranza, and it adds a name--that of "Gallardo" to the list of persons apparently abducted. See below:

### BUENOS AIRES HERALD

Monday, February 13, 1978

## Parolee vanishes

GONZALO Abel Carranza, an inmate of Correction Unit (prison) Nine in La Plata, vanished after being released on parole at 12.10am on the third of this month, according to his mother, Sara García Muñoz de Carranza. Mrs. Carranza and her son's father-in-law, Jorge Aurelio Mazza, have sent letters to the Federal Court of Criminal Appeals, which ordered the release, on parole and to Interior Minister General Albano Harguindeguy reporting the young man's disappearance and asking for their help in locating him.

The missing man was arrested three years ago, placed at the disposal of the executive and tried and convicted of having had in his possession multiple copies of banned publications. He was acquitted of all other charges after it was confirmed that he had not had arms in his possession and had not participated in any violent or illegal action.

In December 1976 Carranza was taken off the list of those held at the disposal of the executive and put under the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts. Last October, his case was reviewed by the Federal Court of Criminal Appeals. In view of the fact that Carranza had been a civil servant (employed by the justice department) and had no previous criminal record, the court ordered his five-year sentence reduced to three and a half years. At the same, he was stripped of all civil rights for life.

With his sentence ending next May 6, Carranza filed for parole, and last January 31 the appeals court ordered his release. Mrs. Carranza said she waited three days and then went to the prison where her son was being held. She was told that her son had been released that same morning at 12.10 along with three other inmates. Mrs. Carranza says that she subsequently learned that the other three men -- allegedly identified as Segall, Dominguez and Gallardo -- also supposedly disappeared after leaving the prison.

Mrs. Carranza, who was born in Spain, says that she is now completely alone. Her husband deserted her years ago, her only daughter lives in Europe and her other son died of leukemia 15 months ago.

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